Barr's Colony

Between Sept/1943 and June 30/1945.

On the morning of April 17, 1903, the little town of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan awoke to find its population increased by some two thousand Englishmen,

Under the amazed eyes of the Saskatoon natives a tent city was spring up which threatened to eclipse Saskatoon in size; and on the streets and over the prairie wandered men, women and children from Devonshire, Yorkshire, London.....from almost every part of England. Many of the men were armed to the teeth with long knives, revolvers, rifles and shotguns, and the whole air was filled with powder smoke and the whine of bullets. Any available target was perforated, for to the new settlers Saskatoon was the threshold of the wild and wooly west. Fingers must be made steady on the trigger, and eyes must be readied to spot the lurking redskin.

But Saskatoon was only the jumping off place; The real destination was the All British Colony to be established on the open prairie some two hundred miles further west.

In 1902 the Reverend I. M. Barr conceived the idea of establishing a colony of all-British people, and to secure land he came to Western Canada. The Government reserved his land, and Barr returned to England in the belief that possibly a few families might be induced to come west to settle. However, when Barr announced his plans in London he was almost immediately flooded with applications. The scheme was enlarged until fully two thousand people, two thirds of whom were women and

children, were signed up to make the journey.

The colony was to come well equipped for settling down on the bare prairie. Barr secured quanities of tents, stores and articles recently used in the African War. Special trains were arranged for to carry the colonists to Liverpool, and a special steamer, the Lake Manitoba was readied to sail with the settlers and their belongings.

A large percent of the colonists knew absolutely nothing about farming. An even larger percent had not the vaguest idea of the country to which they were going. To most of the settlers Western Canada was the far outpost of civilization, where the chief dangers were Indians and wild beasts. They armed themselves accordingly.

Under such circumstances it is one of the wonders of the West that eighteen hundred of the colonists actually arrived at their settlement. It is perhaps an even greater wonder that most of these seemed to somehow survive, and that at least a few prospered.

Among the colonists were Alice and William Rendell, their two children, and a man named Barnes whom Rendell brought along as an assistant. Rendell was one of the settlers who knew how to farm. In his own words : " As far as my qualifications are concerned for my starting farming in Canada I may say I have farmed in the old country all my life ; the estate I rented in Devonshire having been farmed by my forefathers for over two hundred years. I was paying rent at the rate of over ten dollars peracre in addition to rates, tithes, taxes and wages. A crisis having come, and failing to get my landlord to do anything either in reduction of rent or repairs I determined to throw up the life of slavery for others and strike for independence in

Canada for good or ill."

The Rendells came from Liverpool on the Lake Simcoe, having arrived too late to leave with the main Barr party on the Lake Manitoba. This later turned out to be a blessing, since the Simcoe had much better accomodations than the Lake Manitoba, where the settlers were forced to sleep in any nook they could find. Many, in fact, were bunked in the holds.

Even on the Simcoe the trip had its perils. Mrs. Rendell wrote to her friends in England : " Monday proved a terribly rough day, the waves breaking right over the ship. The climate by this time had undergone a great change and was bitterly cold. The captain had to proceed very cautiously owing to fog and icebergs. Tuesday we were surprised to see snow on the decks. It was so slippery it was impossible to keep your footing, and everyone had to take shelter in the saloons. It seemed a long day but it was an eventful one on board--a gentleman slipped over the stairs leading to the cabin and broke his leg. There was a birth on board, and a foreigner in the steer[illegible] cut his throat and is not expected to live. In addition to all this they have discovered no less than twenty stowaways."

Mrs. Rendell is eighty seven years old. She lives in Edmonton now, and *When I went to see her she was all ready to climb aboard a street car...just going to town to do a little shopping. She assured me that she had been through so much that almost anything that happened to her these days seemed tame.

" A year or two ago, " said Mrs. Rendell," I got a combination of 'flu, bronchotis, pneunomia and heaven knows what all. I guess I was pretty sick. Anyway they thought I was so sick I'd never pull out of it, and they called in all the children. I asked 'em what they were doing there, for you see, I knew how tough I was, and they didn't. Well, I pulled out of it, just like we pulled out of so many hard times and scrapes in the Barr Colony days."

Mrs. Rendell showed me the xxxxxxxxxx letters she wrote home during the first few months of their experience as Barr Colonists. They tell a story of high courage.

"We landed at St. Johns April 15th (1903) and were just rushed off the Lake Simcoe like a pack of hounds in a most disgraceful way quite late in the day. We had the usual twelve o'clock meal, and by this time the poor children were famished all tired out with waiting to land. We were one and all faint, cold and weary. Mr. Barr and his party had landed a few days before on the Manitoba and the customs had not been able to get clear of all the baggage, and were not at all prepared to receive any more. We were driven off the boat into the bitter sleet and snow with no possibility of getting on our prospective journey for hours.....We never got away from St. Johns until long after midnight on Tuursday, owing to the dilatory way in which the baggage was discharged from the Lake Simcoe. It was simply scandalous. My husband could not find a single piece of of all our baggage, and they telephoned from the ship that everything was out of the hold.. After causing us and many others hours of anxiety and great suffering and privation they found that any amount of baggage had been left

in the hold. At last our lost property was duly checked and on board the train enroute for Saskatoon. I can only say that the third class carriages on the English railways are a kind to the filthy cars we were huddled into. No sleeping accomodation, and as to the lavatory arrangements They were simply a disgrace to civilization. In this misery we were boxed up to spend just on a week. With so many little children to care for it was a wonder there was not a serious outbreak of illness.....it was almost impossible to get at our provisions, and many a time we felt faint and famished with hunger, to say nothing of being starved with the cold. I took a chill at St Johns from exposure, and a dreadful abscess formed in my face, causing me terrible suffering for three days until it finally broke. I cannot give much description of the country we passed through, as pain almost blinded me, but skirting some of the Great Lakes there were some grand bits of scenery but not a sign of life--no birds, no cattle. The vastness of it all just strikes one with awe. "

Arriving at last in Saskatoon the Rendells, who were now several days behind the main Barr party, found a huge tent city, and circulating around, they saw many humorous things.

One fellow was chopping down a tree, and he was so afraid of cutting himself that he was standing in a big wash tub while he chopped.

Another settler drove his team down to the river to water them, but he didn't understand that their heads were held up by a check-rein. He just went around behind the wagon and lifted up the hind end, thinking that this would

tip the horses down to the water.

Another colonist was heard to ask a bystander how to dig a well, and the bystander said: "I think it would be best to begin at the top" The colonist thanked the stranger and walked away.

The baggage was in a terrible mix-up, and it was several days before the colonists could begin their trek west. They were all eager to set out, and many spent their time practising driving their horses and oxen. Saskatoon was literally cleaned out of all available merchandise, and large sums of money were left with the Saskatoon merchants who were enjoying an unheard-of boom.

During this waiting period the Rendells had a hard time. There was no milk for the children. Finally, after a desperate search for milk Mrs. Rendell saw a settler milking a cow. She hastened toward him, but just as she arrived the cow kicked man, bucket and all. They landed several yards away and the milk was all spilt. Mrs. Rendell burst into tears.

In the morning, however, Mr. Rendell went to the settler and offered to milk the cow if he could have a little milk. The settler said: "Take all you want."

At last the trek began. Like the whole of the enterprise it was badly conducted. The trail was in terrible condition. The first wagon had gone only forty rods before it was firmly mired down in a muskeg. Barr was supposed to have tents placed about a day's journey apart between Saskatoon and the new settlement. He got the tents set up finally, but there

were few provisions. All except those who were well provisioned before setting out, suffered great hardship.

Mr. Rendell and ~~his~~ a friend, Mr. Young, succeeded in buying a pair of good horses, wagon and harness, but even with good equiptment the Rendells found the trek hazardous. Mr. Rendell, however, was a skilful driver, and they were actually among the first to arrive at the settlement, though they hadn't left Saskatoon until April 29--ten days after the first colonists had ~~left Saskatoon~~ pulled out.

When they finally reached the settlement, Mrs. Rendell sat right down and wrote a letter. " On reaching Mr. Barr's camp my husband went to survey the section of land alloted to him, but he was not at all satisfied and would have nothing to do with it. Mr. Barr went with him to look at another section which resulted most happily for my husband. He is now satisfied with his location and considers he is the proud possessor of as fine a tract of land as it is possible to secure. As I am writing, I can look out my tent door and see him quite happy doing his first bit of ploughing on his own soil. There is no doubt it is most beautiful land.

"Our friend and travelling companion (Mr. Young) has the next land adjoining ours which is just as good. We are only half an hours drive from the stores in Mr. Barr's camp, half a mile from the prospective station, and only a few minutes from the school site.

" I must now hark back a bit and tell you something of our bitter experience while treking up to the Promised Land. We had a journey through most awful country, shaking us to pieces--sometimes charging across great streams and

gullies, at others driving through thick scrub. By the time we reached Mr. Barr's camp I think we all felt weary, worn and sad. My dear little Dorkis was taken ill the day before we arrived, and seeing how very feverish she was I was terribly anxious. However, Willie immediately sought out the camp doctor. (A young man named Amos from Montreal, who was a true friedd to the settlers) She had a temperature of 104. I had to poultice her, and thanks to the doctor's kind attention she soon pulled around. But misfortune seemed to dog our footsteps. Our man, Barnes, now sickened and we thought it necessary to call for medical advice. The doctor was much concerned about Barnes, and told us he feared it would turn to pneumonia, but through skilful treatment he managed to ward it off. I suppose all the worry and anxiety proved the last straw as far as I was concerned, for I was next to collapse with a bad chill and bronchitis, from which I am still suffering together with an abcess in my face...all of which combined makes me feel low and out of sorts.

"While in the Barr camp we were greatly terrified at the terrible prairie fires which simply surround us on all sides, and we had some very narrow escapes of being"burned out of house and home." At one time every man in camp, every horse and every plough was ordered out to plough around the camp and save it from total destruction. It was terrible to witness. A terrific wind carried all before it, and as night came on....the pitiless flames as far as eye could see in every direction. /

During the next month or so the Rendells were very busy getting settled. Mr. Rendell ~~ploughed~~ broke about five acres of new land and sowed it to oats, barley and potatoes. They had a heavy snow in May, and toward the last of the month Mr. Young, their neighbor, sickened and died after a four days illness. His wife and four children were just leaving England to join him on the new homestead.

Boards and a plan for a four-room bungalo were purchased from a man in the Barr camp who ~~xxxx~~ had decided to leave, all the lumber, however, had to be hauled from Fort Pitt, some twenty-five miles away.

Barr was falling more and more into disgrace with the settlers, and at last was openly accused of " lining his pockets" with colony funds. Eventually he disappeared and a ~~Barr~~ clergyman, Dr. Lloyd, became the actual guiding hand of the settlement, and was so well liked that the ~~colony~~ colony took his name....becoming Lloydminister.

On August 6th, 1903, Alice Rendell wrote home again.

"I see my last letter was dated June 4th. Time flies even in camp life,which, thank goodness, terminates today. Thisafternoon we contemplate moving up to "Doris Court" and sleep tonight for the first time in four months within shelter of four walls.

"July is the rainy month here, and when the rain does come down it is like a deluge. Imagine the delight of being aroused night after night from your slumbers by rain trickling down on you; and as a rule it has a habit of drifting just the

very side of the tent you happen to be lying. I can assure you we have found it awfully trying."

And ~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ it was six days later that Mrs. Rendell took time to finish her letter:" Since writing the above we have moved to our own domicile, and right proud to look around, even though it be on bare boards, and feel it is indeed our home. All the weary treking at an end. We look from one window and see the lovely oats and barley looking splendid. From another window I look across and see the "master of Dorxis Court" ploughing away for dear life with his fine pair of horses, each acre ploughed meaning the better prospect for the coming year.The said team are just as fat as butter, having taken themselves off some seven weeks across the prairie and baffled all efforts to find them. Four days ago ~~xxxxxx~~ we had some tidings of their whereabouts, and Barnes and another young fellow rode after them, and, to our delight, returned the same evening with the delinquents. Their long absence was getting serious as time is growing short and every available hour must be devoted to ploughing before winter sets in.

"Well, you will be wondering what sort of shanty "Doris Court" is, so I will try and paint it as vividly as possible in your mind's eye. It is in bungalo form, measuring thirty feet by thirty and contains five rooms. One is a large attic which runs the full length of the house, and is quite fit to be used for a bedroom, as we have had it all nicely boarded round and floored. We have two very

large cellars in which we can store all necessary provisions for the winter. Everyong that sees it is of the same opinion that it is the best house in the colony. There will be a verandah four or five feet wide around three sides of the house which will be lovely in summer. We hope in the spring to get some fruit and other trees from the experimental farm to plant. There is certainly a great charm and fascination in planning it all out, knowing that it is our own property. I often say it compensates one largely for all the hardships we have been through.

"Everyong assures us that we will not have the chance of feeling lonely through the winter, as we are close to the township and the people will be trooping out to see us. We have gone to maore expense over our house than we intended, but so many want putting up for the winter that we felt it would repay us to have extra room. There are no stoves as in England and we burn nothing but wood. The fires have to be kept going night and day during the winter, and we have to put up double windows--outside frames that can be removed in summer.

"The wild flowers are very lovely, and my friends who know me best will guess the delight they afford me. The single sunflowers are now in abundance all over our land, also gallardias, a kind of lily of the valley and red tiger lilies. While I think of it I want all my old friends who can to send me some seeds in a letter, as I would like my garden to be one of reminiscences of the dear old country--especially Buckland, Netherton, Homefield, Brooklands and Home House, and I should prize them so."

This letter reflects a tone of growing optimism, but

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there is a sinister note in Alice Rendell's letter of October 21st. "Yesterday was a day never to be forgotten by the inmates of "Doris Court" or inhabitants of Lloydminister. For days past we have been anxiously watching seven huge prairie fires raging in the distance, fearing that a wind might bring heavy disaster to our homestead and town. The night of October 20th was an anxious one, the terrible circle of fire closing around us. The general opinion was that we were safe for the night, but I couldn't sleep.

"The next morning our worst fears were realized, and we knew that a few hours would decide our fate. The only safeguard against prairie fires is a broad belt of ploughing all around your homestead. This my husband had done with the exception of one side, which, alas, was the very side toward which the fire was sweeping with awful rapidity. Needless to say the plough was soon at work and it was ploughing for dear life. Every available tub was filled with water, every sack collected together to beat out the flames when the time should come.

Mr. Rendell, Barmes and another man who is working for us were all on the alert, watching with intense eagerness all the different points. Meanwhile, within the house, I , together with Mrs. Falmank (the wife of our postmaster who is boarding with us for the winter) and Mrs. Bunyan who nursed me when our little girl was born, stood gazing out the window horror-stricken at the awful sight that met our eyes.

We each of us had three little children and each one in arms. We mustered nine little ones all under six. Our little flock, fortunately, were too young to realize the deadly peril

we were in and we had to keep on " rounding them up" preparatory to a hasty flight. I collected a few valuables and looked around at the very cozy home, wondering whatever would become of us if in a few moments we should be left homeless.

"At last we could stand still no longer and the three women rushed out and filling buckets with the dirty rain soaked up from the foundation we scattered it all over the ground immediately around the house. The wind was blowing a hurricane, driving or rather driving the fire straight on us.

"Willie continued ploughing until absolutely compelled to stop by the heat and smoke. Our two men meanwhile drenched our roof with water and drenched themselves with wet sacks hurried to the weakest points in the fire- guard, only about one hundred and fifty yards off the house.

"We could do nothing more than wait with bated breath. At last came the joyful sound " safe!" from the western side; but the danger was not put over for we were threatened again from the northwestern side.

"After the horses had been placed in safety the men had to rush around to meet the enemy at the fresh point of attack. We waited in terrible suspense, and you can guess our joy when my husband came back to us with the welcome assurance: "All danger over. Safe for another year."

"We were all too overjoyed for words, and after the dreadful strain of so many hours you may pretty well know what the reaction was like. We lost four ton of hay but many have lost all their hay ricks. The fire started by the Vermillion river and was in for days before it reached us and swept on down toward Battleford. There is no doubt whatever that our fire- guard in a great measure saved the town life.

" Apart from the horror of it, the fire was a wonderful sight .. Of course on the prairie you can see for an enormous distance, and for twenty or thirty miles there was nothing but flames. As it grew dusk the effect was most weird. How thankful we were that the fire reached us in the daytime and not in the night!"

After the fire things seemed to go well. Social life was organized. Recreations were made for the benefit of the whole colony and Mr. Lloyd organized a choir and held weekly meetings at his own house. Town lots were staked and leased, and it was decided that the community put up a building which would serve as a school, church, and recreation hall. Everyone in the colony was to donate a log, and the name of the donor was to be carved on it. They planned a "bee" to erect the building. And after Christmas was over Mrs. Kendall wrote home in a new spirit of optimism.

" There can be no doubt whatever that the colony will succeed, and that Lloydminster in a few years time will be a very large and prosperous center. But I hope I have, ere this, dispelled all unfavorable ideas as to our fortune. Probably many who have been commiserating our lot now find matter and of pity in our lot, for while [illegible] still [illegible] "yberrating" we are on the [illegible] ... we shall [illegible] forge headway in truly [illegible] this [illegible] country."

And the winter did go well. In November, 1903, nearly two years later, Mrs. Kendall wrote [illegible] new [illegible] comfort." Lloydminster is now [illegible] and [illegible] to be [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] that the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

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three hotels in the course of erection; stores of all kinds; a bank; a drug store and a printing office from which is issued our newsy little paper the " Lloydminster Times."

"This xxxxxxx year has been a good season on the whole for harvest, but everything has to be done with such a rush, the summer season is so short. One needs an infinite amount of patience in this climate, the late and early frosts play such havoc. We had about two acres of potatoes and a splendid crop, but alas, an early frost spoiled half before they could be got out of the ground."

The Rendalls, of course, weren't the only xxxxxxxx Barr colonists who made good. In 1911 the community raised xxx oats which were judged best in the United States and Canada. This performance was repeated in 1913 and 1914. By 1922 the colonists had taken sixty-five international and Provincial prizes for grain and stock.

I think that many of the colonists found in freedom they sought, and possibly, in the light of such blessings, Barr should be credited with what was at least one prior good idea. I asked Mrs. Rendall what finally became of Barr and she said:

" I don't know where he went after he left Lloydminster. But I know where he is now. He's in a very hot place."

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In 1902 the Reverend I.M. Barr conceived the idea of establishing a colony of all-British people, and to secure land he came to Western Canada. The Government reserved his land, and Barr returned to England in the belief that possibly a few families might be induced to come west to settle. However, when Barr announced his plans in London he was almost immediately flooded with applications. The scheme was enlarged until fully two thousand people, two thirds of whom were women and children, were signed up to make the journey.

The colony was to come well equipped for settling down on the bare prairie. Barr secured quantities of tents, stores and articles recently used in the African War. Special trains were arranged to carry the colonists to Liverpool, and a special steamer, the Lake Manitoba was readied to sail with the settlers and their belongings.

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Under such circumstances it is one of the wonders of the West that eighteen hundred of the colonists actually arrived at their settlement. It is perhaps an even greater wonder that most of these seemed to somehow survive, and that at least a few prospered.

Among the colonists were Alice and William Rendell, their two children, Doris and Leslie and a man named Barnes whom Rendell brought along as a helper. Rendell was one of the settlers who knew how to farm. In his own words: "As far as my qualifications are concerned for my starting farming in Canada I may say I have farmed in the old country all my life; the estate I rented in Devonshire having been farmed by my forefathers for over two hundred years. I was paying rent at the rate of over ten dollars per acre in addition to

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When they finally reached the settlement, Mrs. Rendell sat right down and wrote a letter. "On reaching Mr. Barr's camp my husband went to survey the section of land alloted to him, but he was not at all satisfied and would have nothing to do with it. Mr. Barr sent with him to look at another section which resulted most happily for my husband. He is now satisfied with his location and considers he is the proud possessor of as fine a tract of land as it is possible to secure. As I am writing, I can look out my tent door and see him quite happy doing his first bit of ploughing on his own soil. There is no doubt it is most beautiful land.

"Our friend and travelling companion (Mr. Young) has the next land adjoining ours which is just as good. We are only half an hours drive from the stores in Mr. Barr's camp, half a mile from the prospective station, and only a few minutes from the school site.

"I must now hark back a bit and tell you something of our bitter experience while treking up to the Promised Land. We had a journey through most awful country, shaking us to pieces--sometimes charging across great streams and gullies, at others driving through thick shrub. By the time we reached Mr. Barr's camp I think we all felt weary, worn and sad. My dear little Doris was taken ill the day before we arrived, and seeing how very feverish she was I was terribly anxious. However, Willie immediately sought out the camp doctor. (A young man named Amos from Montreal, who was a true friend to the settlers) She had a temperature of 104. I had to poultice her, and thanks to the doctor's kind attention she soon pulled around. But misfortune seemed to dog our footsteps. Our man, Barnes, now sickened and we thought it necessary to call for medical advice. The doctor was much concerned about Barnes, and told us he feared it would turn to pneumonia, but through skilful treatment he managed to ward it off. I suppose all the worry and anxiety proved the last straw as far as I was concerned, for I was next to collapse with a bad chill and bronchitis, from which I am still suffering together with an abcess in my face..all of which combined makes me feel low and out of sorts.

"While in the Barr camp we were greatly terrified at the terrible prairie fires which simply surround us on all sides, and we had some very narrow escapes of being "burned out of house and home." At one time every man in camp, every horse and every plough was ordered out to plough around the camp and save it from total destruction. It was terrible to witness. A terrific wind carried all before it, and as night came on...the pitiless flames as far as eye could see in every direction.

During the next month or so the Rendells were very busy getting settled. Mr. Rendell broke about five acres of new land and sowed it to oats, barley and potatoes. They had a heavy snow in May, and toward the last of the month Mr.

Young, their neighbor, sickened and died after a four days illness. His wife and four children were just leaving England to join him on the new homestead.

Boards and a plan for a four-room bungalo were purchased from a man in the Barr camp who had decided to leave, all the lumber, however, had to be hauled from Fort Pitt, some twenty-five miles away.

Barr was falling more and more into disgrace with the settlers, and at last was openly accused of "lining his pockets" with colony funds. Eventually he disappeared and a clergyman, Dr. Lloyd, became the actual guiding hand of the settlement, and was so well liked that the colony took his name..becoming Lloydminster.

On August 6th, 1903, Alice Rendell wrote home again. "I see my last letter was dated June 4th. Time flies even in camp life, which, thank goodness, terminates today. This afternoon we contemplate moving up to "Doris Court" and sleep tonight for the first time in four months within shelter of four walls.

"July is the rainy month here, and when the rain does come down it is like a deluge. Imagine the delight of being aroused night after night from your slumbers by rain trickling down on you; and as a rule it has a habit of drifting just the very side of the tent you happen to be lying. I can assure you we have found it awfully trying."

And it was six days later that Mrs. Rendell took time to finish her letter: "Since writing the above we have moved to our own domicile, and right proud to look around, even though it be on bare boards, and feel it is indeed our home. All the weary treking at an end. We look from one window and see the lovely oats and barley looking splendid. From another window I look across and see the "master of Doris Court" ploughing away for dear life with his fine pair of horses, each acre ploughed meaning the better prospect for the coming year. The said team are just as fat as butter, having taken themselves off some seven weeks across the prairie and baffled all efforts to find them. Four days ago we had some tidings of their whereabouts, and Barnes and another young fellow rode after them, and, to our delight, returned the same evening with the delinquents. Their long absence was getting serious as time is growing short and every available hour must be devoted to ploughing before winter sets in.

"Well, you will be wondering what sort of shanty "Doris Court" is, so I will try and paint it as vividly as possible in your mind's eye. It is in bungalo form, measuring thirty feet by thirty and contains five rooms. One is a large attic which runs the full length of the house, and is quite fit to be used for a bedroom, as we have had it all nicely boarded round and floored. We have two very large cellars in which we can store all necessary provisions for the winter. Everyone that sees it is of the same opinion that it is the best house in the colony. There will be a verandah four or five feet wide around three sides of the house which will be lovely in summer. We hope in the spring to get some fruit and other trees from the experimental farm to plant. There is certainly a great charm and fascination in planning it all out, knowing that it is our own property. I often say it compensates one largely for all the hardships we have been through.

"Everyone assures us that we will not have the chance of feeling lonely through the winter, as we are close to the township and the people will be

trooping out to see us. We have gone to more expense over our house than we intended, but so many want putting up for the winter that we felt it would repay us to have extra room. There are no stoves as in England and we burn nothing but wood. The fires have to be kept going night and day during the winter, and we have to put up double windows--outside frames that can be removed in summer.

"The wild flowers are very lovely, and my friends who know me best will guess the delight they afford me. The single sunflowers are now in abundance all over our land, also gallardias, a kind of lily of the valley and red tiger lillies. While I think of it I want all my old friends who can to send me some seeds in a letter, as I would like my garden to be one of reminiscences of the dear old country--especially Buckland, Netherton, Homefield, Brooklands and Home House, and I should prize them so."

This letter reflects a tone of growing optimism, but there is a sinister note in Alice Rendell's letter of October 21st. "Yesterday was a day never to be forgotten by the inmates of "Doris Court" or inhabitants of Lloydminster. For days past we have been anxiously watching seven huge prairie fires raging in the distance, fearing that a wind might bring heavy disaster to our homestead and town. The night of October 20th was an anxious one, the terrible circle of fire closing around us. The general opinion was that we were safe for the night, but I couldn't sleep.

"The next morning our worst fears were realized, and we knew that a few hours would decide our fate. The only safeguard against prairie fires is a broad belt of ploughing all around your homestead. This my husband had done with the exception of one side, which, alas, was the very side toward which the fire was sweeping with awful rapidity. Needless to say the plough was soon at work and it was ploughing for dear life. Every available tub was filled with water, every sack collected together to beat out the flames when the time should come.

Mr. Rendell, Barnes and another man who is working for us were all on the alert, watching with intense eagerness all the different points. Meanwhile, within the house, I, together with Mrs. Falmark (the wife of our postmaster who is boarding with us for the winter) and Mrs. Bunyan who nursed me when our little girl was born, stood gazing out the window horror-stricken at the awful sight that met our eyes.

We each of us had three little children and each one in arms. We mustered nine little ones all under six. Our little flock, fortunately, were too young to realize the deadly peril we were in and we had to keep on " rounding them up" preparatory to a hasty flight. I collected a few valuables and looked around with a very heavy heart, wondering whatever would become of us if in a few moments we should be left homeless.

"At last we could stand still no longer and we three women rushed out and filling buckets with the clay and soil dug up from the foundation we scattered it all over the ground immediately around the house. The wind was blowing a hurricane, bringing or rather driving the fire straight on us.

"Willie continued ploughing until absolutely compelled to stop by the heat

and smoke. Our two men meanwhile drenched our roof with water and arming themselves with wet sacks hurried to the weakest points in the fire-guard, only about one hundred and fifty yards off the house.

"We could do nothing more than wait with bated breath. At last came the joyful sound "safe!" from the western side; but the danger was not yet over for we were threatened again from the northwestern side.

"After the horses had been placed in safety the men had to rush around to meet the enemy at the fresh point of attack. We waited in terrible suspense, and you can guess our joy when my husband came back to us with the welcome assurance: "All danger over. Safe for another year."

"We were all too overjoyed for words, and after the dreadful strain of so many hours you may pretty well know what the reaction was like. We lost four ton of hay but many have lost all their hay ricks. The fire started by the Vermillion river and was raging for days before it reached us and swept on down toward Battleford. There is no doubt whatever that our fire-guard in a great measure saved the town life.

"Apart from the horror of it, the fire was a wonderful sight. Of course on the prairie you can see for an enormous distance, and for twenty or thirty miles there was nothing but flames. As it grew dusk the effect was most weird. How thankful we were that the fire reached us in the daytime and not in the night!"

After the fire things seemed to go well. Social life was organized. Preparations were made for a gathering of the whole colony on Christmas Day. Mr. Lloyd organized a choir and held weekly meetings at his own house. There were concerts and debates, and it was decided that the community put up a building which should serve as a school, church, and recreation hall. Everyone in the colony was to donate a log, and the name of the donor was to be carved on it. They planned a "bee" to erect the building. And after Christmas was over Mrs. Rendell wrote home in a new spirit of optimism.

"There can be no doubt whatever that the colony will succeed, and that Lloydminster in a few years time will be a very large and prosperous center. But I hope I have,ere this, dispelled all unfavorable ideas as to our fortune. Probably many who have been commiserating our lot have far greater need of pity than we, for while they are still plodding and "hybernating" we are on the progressive...probably making greater headway in twelve months than they in as many years. This is nothing if not a "Go-ahead" country."

And the country did go ahead. In November, 1905, nearly two years later, Mrs. Rendell wrote again about the new community." Lloydminster is now quite a little town, the rail is up and our station is a pretty addition. Little did I think that the whistle of an engine could ever sound so sweet. The passenger service is not properly organized as yet, as the line is still in the hands of the construction party; but as soon as the line is completed and handed over to the C.N.R. company, than we shall have a regular service.

"It is hard for you in the old country, surrounded by every comfort and luxury, to realize in thedegree that we have put through the past two years in comparative isolation. Sometimes we had not the slightest idea of what was going on in the outside world for a fortnight or three weeks together. In the winter we were at the mercy of the weather; for news or provisions had to come by road from Saskatoon. When they did come the price was enough to make the pluckiest feel downhearted, for we saw the capital we had thought ample to carry us on for a year or so vanishing like dust.....almost in bare living. "It will be different when the train is in" became a stock phrase. It was weary waiting and many of us had almost lost heart, until, one day, we heard the rails were laid within two miles of Lloydminster, and in less than a week later the first train steamed in.

"There has been quite a revolution in the price of everything. Flour for which we paid $5.00 per hundred, is now $2.80 top price. Lumber too, is coming down in price. Everyone is now building lumber houses instead of the log shack of the "old-timers". Bricks are being used extensively for building, and this winter will probably be a severe test of whether they will stand the climate.

"When we arrived at the colony in May 1903 we saw at most a half-dozen tents on the bare prairie. Now there are three hotels in the course of erection; stores of all kinds; a bank; a drugstore and a printing office from which is issued our newsy little paper the "Lloydminster Times."

"This year has been a good season on the whole for harvest, but everything has to be done with such a rush, the summer season is so short. One needs an infinite amount of patience in this climate, the late and early frosts play such havoc. We had about two acres of potatoes and a splendid crop, but alas, an early frost spoiled half before they could be got out of the ground."

The Rendells of course weren't the only Barr Colonists who made good. In 1911 the community raised oats which were judged best in the United States and Canada. This performance was repeated in 1913 and 1914. By 1922 the colonists had taken sixty-five international and provincial prizes for grain and stock.

I think that many of the colonists found the freedom they sought, and possibly, in the light of such blessings, Barr should be credited with what was at least on paper a good idea. I asked Mrs. Rendell what finally became of Barr and she said:

"I don't know where he went after he left Lloydminster. But I know where he is now. He's in a very hot place."